

^{Q3}
~~Don't~~ wherein the second curved shim is secured to the U-bolt by a snap-fit connection.

^{Q4}
~~21~~ 31. A clamp comprising:
a saddle member having a concave saddle portion;
a U-bolt mounted on the saddle member, the U-bolt having a concave portion oriented opposed to the saddle member concave saddle portion;
a first curved shim secured to the saddle member concave saddle portion, the first curved shim being made of metal;
a second curved shim secured to the U-bolt concave portion, the second shim being made of metal, and the first curved shim having a concave side opposed to a concave side of the second curved shim; and
the first curved shim covering at least a central, mid-region of the concave saddle portion.

~~28~~ 32. The clamp of claim ~~21~~ 31, wherein the first curved shim covers the entire concave saddle portion.

~~29~~ 33. The clamp of claim ~~21~~ 31, wherein the first curved shim forms a half-cylinder.

~~30~~ 34. The clamp of claim ~~21~~ 31, wherein the U-bolt includes legs, and the second curved shim includes outwardly projecting ears defining openings for receiving the legs of the U-bolt.

~~31~~ 35. The clamp of claim ~~21~~ 31, wherein the clamp includes only two shims.

Remarks

Applicants have now amended claims 1-6, 8, 9, 12 and 13, canceled claims 17-20, and added new claims 31-35. Claims 1-16 and 21-35 are presently pending in this application. Examination of the application and timely allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

The above-identified patent application currently includes five independent claims, namely, claims 1, 9, 12, 13 and 31. Claims 1, 9, 12, 13 and 31 have been amended to be identical to independent claims 1, 9, 12, 13 and 21 of the parent application, U.S. Serial No.

09/025,895. Such claims in the parent application were allowed by a Notice of Allowance mailed on July 21, 2000. Thus, for the same reasons specified in the parent, it is submitted that independent claims 1, 9, 12, 13 and 31 are in immediate condition for allowance. The remaining claims all depend from the above-identified allowable independent claims. Thus, it is submitted that such dependent claims are also in condition for allowance.

Since the claims from the parent application have been inserted into the above-identified patent application, Applicants have not paid the issue fee for the parent application. Thus, as of October 24, 2000, the parent application was abandoned. Therefore, it is submitted that no double patenting issues are raised between the parent application and the present application.

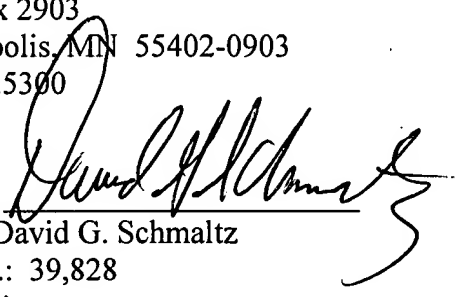
Please direct any inquiries regarding the above-identified application to the undersigned attorney at 612.336.4617.



Dated: 10/30/00

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0903
612.332.5300

Signed: 
Name: David G. Schmaltz
Reg. No.: 39,828
DGS/amj